

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions,  
and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) A mask for the protection  
against biological agents, comprising:

~~consisting in~~

a cup-shaped chamber defined by a central panel, an  
upper panel, and a lower panel joined together;

each of the central panel, the upper panel, and the  
lower panel comprised of a plurality of layers , ~~characterized in~~  
~~that at least one of them, having filtering functions, is the~~  
~~layers~~ composed of a cellulose-based substrate supporting a  
fiber-based matrix structure of borosilicate micro-glass fibers  
bound together by a vinyl acetate resin, ~~the fiber matrix being~~  
~~supported by a strong, cellulose based, substrate and the~~  
~~structure being treated with~~ and iii) a silicone based coating  
imparting to impart hydrophobic properties on the structure and  
the substrate;

a boundary sealing layer located on perimeter edges of  
the cup-chamber; and

a cylinder-shaped valve located on the outside of the central panel configured to facilitate passage of exhaled air from an interior of the mask to ambient air,

the valve comprising a valve seat secured by a raised valve cover,

the valve cover including apertures,

an upper end of the valve seat including a relief with a concave surface and defining a circumference of the relief,

a continuous, cylindrical cross-sectional shaped, O-ring located along an entirety of the concave surface of circumference of the relief,

a circular valve flap with outside edges located on a upper side of the O-ring,

the valve cover extending over and covering the valve flap, the relief, and the O-ring,

the valve cover further including a flap support pressing down on a center of the valve flap.

27. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 26,  
wherein the plurality of layers comprises three layers and the at least one layer is a central layer of the three layer located intermediate i) an outer layer having a covering function and ii) an inner layer having a shape-retaining function. ~~the plurality of layers comprising:~~

~~— a central layer, having filtering function, composed of the borosilicate micro glass fibers bound together by a vinyl acetate resin, the fiber matrix being supported by a strong, cellulose based, substrate and the structure being treated with a silicone based coating to impart hydrophobic properties,~~

~~— an inner layer having shape retaining function, and~~

~~— an outer layer having covering function~~

28. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the ~~filter~~ central layer has thickness ranging between 150 and 400 microns and ~~unit area ranging in a amount of~~ between 25 and 65 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

29. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inner layer, ~~with the function of retaining shape and providing structure to the mask body as well as providing support for the filtration layer,~~ is made from non-woven fabric ~~obtained by~~ of one of polypropylene fibers and ~~[[or]]~~ polyester fibers.

30. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inner layer is made from non-woven fabric consisting ~~[[in]]~~ of polypropylene fibers.

31. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27, wherein the outer layer, ~~having covering function to protect the~~

~~filtration layer from abrasion,~~ is made from non-woven fabric  
~~obtained by~~ of polyolefins, polyester or nylon fibers.

32. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 27,  
wherein the outer layer is made from meltblown polypropylene fibers.

33-37. (cancelled)

38. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim  
[[37]] 26, wherein ~~the material of~~ the boundary sealing layer is  
~~made from~~ a natural rubber latex resin or a silicone based resin.

39. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in  
claim [[37]] 26, wherein the boundary sealing layer is made from  
natural rubber latex applied in ~~some~~ a 2 mm thickness and in an  
amount ~~unit area~~ ranging between 200 and 400 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

40. (currently amended) A mask as claimed in claim 26,  
further comprising a nose clip located in the upper panel.~~wherein~~  
~~adjoining a boundary sealing layer, a strip, made from the same~~  
~~material than the boundary sealing layer, is applied in the nose clip~~  
~~area; the strip makes the mask more comfortable to wear and,~~  
~~further on, improves the seal between the mask and the face at the~~  
~~nose portion wherein deformations and plies may normally be present~~